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ADVERSE EFFECTS OF THE CHANGE OF THE MILITARY'S CORE MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ

by

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Abstract

As combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq continue, military forces are being tasked with an increasing number of non-combat missions. Missions traditionally associated with Phase IV operations and beyond, such as peacekeeping, stability, security, and nation-building are being combined with Phase III combat operations. A lack of clear delineation exists between these phases. There are no agreed upon doctrinal definitions of Phase IV operations or clarity of mission responsibilities for the military during this phase. Doctrine is hastily being changed in an attempt to incorporate these new missions into the core mission statements of combat units, and Title 10 responsibilities of the services. DoD guidance for the military's role in these missions does not match joint doctrine, which does not match service doctrine. DoD has tasked the military services to determine requirements for Phase IV operations, but does not clearly define their role and does not provide guidance or recommendations for force size. As a result, services are focusing the acquisition of equipment to support increased non-combat taskings, without fully understanding which tasks they are responsible for executing. These changes, which are most evident in the Army and Air Force, are a significant distraction from the military's primary mission, and are degrading the combat readiness of the military. It is evident that inadequate thought and planning was exercised prior to combat operations beginning in Afghanistan and Iraq, specifically, for Phase IV operations. There has been insufficient development of non-military organizations to take the lead in Phase IV operations. As a result, the military has taken over missions that should be accomplished by regional or international institutions, NGOs, or civilian resources. If this problem is not solved, the military will continue to be over-extended with degraded combat capability, and is at risk of not being able to deliver decisive victory in a major war.

INTRODUCTION

In 2000 Condoleezza Rice, as Governor Bush's national security advisor during his first presidential campaign wrote, "The president must remember that the military is a special instrument. It is lethal, and is meant to be. It is not a civilian police force. It is not a political referee. And it is most certainly not designed to build a civilian society."[1] Rice's advice infers that the military should be used with extreme discretion, as an instrument to quickly neutralize threats to the United States. Prior to September 11, former president George W. Bush himself criticized the Clinton administration for spreading the military too thin for peace keeping operations.[2] And yet the National Strategy documents, as well as the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review[3], are shifting the military's role from a lethal instrument to one that conducts stability operations and even nation building. Department of Defense Instruction 3000.05, published in 2009, is a document that defines how the military should conduct stability operations. This instruction describes stability operations as a core military mission, and demands a proficiency level "equivalent to combat operations."[4] The National Security Presidential Directive/NSPD-44 provides conflicting guidance, placing the State Department in the lead for reconstruction and stabilization efforts, but does not specify allocation of resources except to "coordinate with the Department of Defense."[5] The military's primary mission of conducting combat operations is being adversely affected by the addition of non-combat mission sets on an unprecedented scale. This substantial shift of the military's mission, most notable in the Army and Air Force, poses significant consequences to future combat capability.

Every couple of years since 2001, new buzzwords appear in conventional military discourse and eventually find their way into strategy and doctrine. Transformation, full spectrum operations, information operations, and adaptation are a few. These words invoke a sense of

change, and when used in a certain context, suggest that one or more of these new concepts are the silver bullet that will defeat the terrorists, promote security and stabilization, and allow democracy to blossom in the Middle East. As operations in Afghanistan and Iraq continue, more terms emerge, with associated explanations and definitions explaining how application of this new term or concept is what we've been missing for the last eight years. The terms "peacekeeping" and "peace enforcement" have been stigmatized since the inconclusive results in Haiti and Somalia, and policy makers are struggling to find suitable replacement definitions that describe ongoing operations. Some words from times past are realizing renewed emphasis. Stability, security, transition, and reconstruction (SSTR) operations, and nation building are now at the top of the list.

SSTR is not a new mission set for the U.S. military. What is new, however, is that the U.S. is now conducting SSTR on a national scale, in two predominately Muslim countries. Furthermore, there are large scale insurgencies occurring in both of these countries, and there is overall resistance by neutral populations to Western occupying forces. Previous successful SSTR operations do not match current efforts in either scope or context. In Afghanistan and Iraq the operational phases of conflict, as defined in JP 5-0[6], have overlapped, prohibiting objective and mission clarity for the military. The U.S. is attempting to simultaneously conduct stability and even nation building operations (Phases IV and V), while committing vast numbers of troops to provide security and even engage enemy forces (Phase III). The U.S. military simply does not have enough people in uniform to accomplish all of these missions simultaneously, and international contributions in the form of military support fall far short of the requirements. The insurgent threat is significant enough to pose a non-permissive, dangerous environment to NGOs and other civilian organizations who would otherwise contribute to SSTR

and nation building operations. As a result, the military is being tasked to accomplish these missions, as well as sustained COIN operations, security for itself, the local population, and civilian organizations in country. Both Afghanistan and Iraq present examples of these circumstances.

There are very few historical cases that serve as examples of how the U.S. military successfully conducted SSTR and nation-building operations. The most often cited are the rebuilding of West Germany and Japan following WWII. There are distinct differences between efforts to rebuild these two countries and SSTR operations in OEF and OIF. Perhaps most importantly, there was not a significant, sustained insurgency in West Germany or Japan following WWII. Additionally, there was not a fundamental rejection of Western influence or ideals by the populations or governments. In other words, for the most part the SSTR operations conducted by the U.S. in Europe and Asia following WWII were viewed as "legitimate" by the populations. While not perfect, the Marshall Plan and Bretton Woods system[7] aided and allowed West Germany to rebuild their nation, specifically the industrial bases. While the overall population undoubtedly resented the destruction and financial burdens imposed upon their country following the war, the Allies and West German government were able to conduct SSTR operations with virtually no insurgent resistance. Japan presents a similar example. From 1945-1947, occupying forces, under direction of the Supreme Command of Allied Powers (SCAP), successfully contributed to stabilizing Japan without interference from insurgents.[8] Japan, with the help of the U.S., went on to build the most successful economy in their history.

The U.S. has not realized similar success in Afghanistan and Iraq, most likely due to cultural complications resulting from Islamic versus non-Islamic and tribal versus modern, industrialized civilizations. In Afghanistan, there is less interest by the local populace with controlling a

centralized government than in maintaining tribal autonomy throughout the region. Four major tribes are splintered based not only on language differences, but significant cultural and even religious differences as well.[9] To further complicate matters, the geographical boundaries that separate tribes and kinship groups extend into Pakistan to the south and east, and into Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan to the north. The Taliban, wielding a strict brand of Islam, have come the closest to uniting and providing some semblance of rule over several of these tribes in modern times. Similarly, the Kurds, Shiites, and Suunis have been competing for control in Iraq for centuries. Although Iraq has more modern infrastructure as well as a more distinct central government than can be found in Afghanistan, the state has similar difficulties appeasing the competing ethnic populations. In both countries, the application of Western techniques to stabilize and rebuild have met significant resistance by large numbers of the indigenous population.

Unfortunately, the opposition presented by insurgents was far greater than anticipated when combat operations began in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003. While it can be argued that the military did in fact achieve quick and decisive victories against the Taliban and Saddam's forces, it appears that there was more involved in those countries besides defeating armed forces. In both countries there still remain ethnically diverse sub populations competing for tribal and government control. Worse still even the "neutral" populations, those who do not directly support the insurgents or the government, are opposed to western forces occupying land within their borders. Religion and ethnicity play a role in this opposition, as both Islamic and Arab populations within these two states have repeatedly announced and demonstrated. As a result, SSTR operations conducted by the U.S. are not necessarily viewed as good intentions by the general population. SSTR operations conducted by an outsider with a weapon are viewed with

even more contempt. There is not a clear path leading to stability, and neither country has as of yet been transformed into a "beacon of democracy." Both countries now require massive external security assistance, which casts a shadow on SSTR and nation building operations. There is little indication that external military forces will guarantee that either country will have a government viewed as capable by its citizens in the near future. As long as security remains such a significant problem, civilian relief organizations and others qualified to engage in stability and nation building operations will be sidelined, while the military continues to struggle between Phase III, IV, and V operations.

ARMY CHALLENGES

Since 2006 the Army has transformed its units from division level force structures to brigade combat teams boasting more flexibility, mobility, and efficient combat capability. This is probably a positive change, but should be structured and reserved for conventional combat operations. Army leadership has fully embraced Rumsfeld's "transformation" lingo. However, the capability gap that is receiving all of the attention is not whether the Army is prepared to engage against a peer enemy, but rather on an inadequate SSTR operations capability. The vision of "shock and awe" has been replaced with a shifted focus towards protracted stabilization and nation building efforts. Army doctrine and definitions are being changed to reflect this shift in focus.

Field Manual 3-07 fails to clearly define the Army's role in SSTR. This manual credits major interagency organizations as having the lead in coordination between working groups, but not the lead in stability operations. Additionally, the manual relegates liaison duties to these interagency organizations, and discusses non-governmental organizations as periphery players who are not well integrated into military efforts.[10] Instead of developing doctrine which

recognizes that interagency and non-governmental organizations have the lead in SSTR, the Army is heavily incorporating this mission into its doctrine. The Post Conflict Essential Tasks Matrix (ETM), co-developed by DoS and DoD, describes actions to be taken when Phase III begins to transition to Phase IV.[11] Army Tactical Tasks have been aligned with the ETM, conveniently mixing supposed post-conflict operations with combat tasks.[12] This effectively tasks the soldier to transition from a combatant to a peace officer while using the same guidance document, and is reminiscent of General Krulak's Three Block War concept developed in the 1990s. The Three Block War describes a situation in which a soldier could find himself engaged in combat, followed by a humanitarian type effort, followed by rebuilding efforts, all within a three block radius. Krulak's concept celebrates the "strategic soldier," capable of conducting any and all missions that span combat to construction. Historically, the only U.S. military organizations that could reasonably train and field a force to deal with the Three Block War have been the Marines and special operations forces, and even then successful operations have only been realized when forces supporting this concept were applied in a very limited application. The soldier is not trained or equipped to be employed in a Three Block War scenario, however, the Army claims it can take on all but 37 of the ETMs (out of over a thousand),[13] providing one more example of the military's willingness to convolute the combat mission, and to retain the SSTR mission while sidelining civilian contributors.

The acronym IS&TO was coined by the Army in 2006, and stands for intervention, stabilization, and transformation operations. This term attempts to align Army doctrine with Joint Force Command's description of stability operations.[14] A critique of this technique claims that "attempting to have the same people in the same uniforms perform combat and nation building roles confuses the host nation and the soldiers themselves."[15] This critique is valid and

can be seen in both Afghanistan and Iraq today, where the neutral population does not perceive Coalition forces as winning "their" battles. The nation building and stability operations, while possibly perceived as positive actions, are at the end of the day being accomplished by an occupying force who has not yet delivered peace and prosperity to this neutral population. Combat operations conducted by these same forces while attempting to simultaneously conduct SSTR operations further confuses and agitates the neutral population. It seems that IS&TO was yet another term developed that claims troops need more training in order to conduct stability operations, and states that it should be a "core competency" in Army officer training, without addressing manpower and fiscal requirements that are necessary to affect this mission.

A comment made by relieved General Kevin Byrnes, former commander of Army Training and Doctrine Command, shows the amount of confusion present at the senior Army leadership ranks. "Our primary mission is not to fight and win the nation's wars, though that's our most important mission. We exist to serve the nation, however the nation wants us to serve wherever and whenever we are needed."[16] This paradoxical statement, in which the Army's mission to fight and win wars is not the primary, but at the same time the most important mission, illustrates the lack of mission focus currently present in the military. Further confusion can be found in a quote by former UN Secretary-General Dag Hammerskold, printed in the Army's Peace Operations Manual FM 100-23. The former UN Secretary is quoted "Peacekeeping is not a job for soldiers, but only a soldier can do it."[17] In light of the transition in terms from peacekeeping to SSTR, the first half of the former Secretary's statement should be applied to today's military. Instead, doctrine seems to latch on to the second half of the statement.

Senior Army leaders are advocating the addition of stabilization capability that should be incorporated into existing BCTs and headquarters elements.[18] This requires more personnel, more equipment, and more money – a tall order in today's fiscally challenged DoD budget. In addition, this new mission set requires massive training. Money, training time, and other resources dedicated to this new mission take away from the primary combat mission and degrade the Army's capability to defeat the enemy decisively in combat. In order to mitigate fiscal shortfalls that severely limit how many new capabilities the Army can add to its arsenal, the 2010 QDR tasks them to convert heavy BCTs to the Stryker configuration.[19] This effectively degrades the heavy BCT capability of the Army, which could prove to be a vital asset in the event that the U.S. finds itself in a conventional conflict with a near peer opponent. According to Army Chief of Staff, General George Casey, as a result of extended operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Army would be significantly strained to bring conventional land forces to bear against North Korea or China. General Casey asserts that it will take eighteen to twenty four months to close this gap in capability, until yet another transition that addresses deployment cycles takes effect.[20] It can be assumed from this statement that this gap has existed at least since 2003, when conventional combat forces were deployed to Iraq during ongoing operations in Afghanistan.

The Army has undoubtedly shouldered most of the SSTR burden in both Afghanistan and Iraq, due to perceived available manpower. As a result, SSTR operations have transformed Army doctrine, acquisition of future weapon systems, conventional combat training, and equipment/personnel allocation to combat units. The future Army will most likely be better shaped to engage in small scale, irregular warfare operations, but will be less capable of

engaging a near peer foe. A course correction is necessary in order to bring back a ground combat force capable of soundly defeating *any* land threat.

AIR FORCE CHALLENGES

Combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq require air power. In the early days and months of each campaign, air power proved to be co-decisive in swiftly defeating enemy military forces. Massed airpower quickly gained control over the skies of Afghanistan and Iraq. However, as the air to air and surface to air threat has been significantly reduced, the requirement for air power has shifted to primarily close air support, limited interdiction, ISR, and air mobility. The close air support is focused on supporting ground troops who are fighting insurgents. The air mobility is focused on providing lift for supplies, equipment, and personnel to the ground units who are fighting insurgents. However, these two crucial missions that support ongoing combat operations are not being advertised as the Air Force's main effort. In order to become more engaged in OEF and OIF, it would appear that the Air Force has followed the Army's lead in transitioning to becoming heavily involved in SSTR operations and even nation building. There is now an aggressive information campaign which focuses on ensuring that other services know that the Air Force is "all in," and airmen are being committed to engage in everything from convoy operations to providing security to forward operating bases that have no runways. The employment of air power has taken a second row seat to efforts that capitalize on the latest buzzwords mentioned earlier. Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), contract officers, lawyers, and civil engineers, to name a few, are bearing an increased burden of Air Force deployments. The deployment requirements are not predominately to support U.S. combat troops, but rather to train indigenous forces, build infrastructure, and increase government and military capability in

Afghanistan and Iraq. While these are undoubtedly heroic efforts on the part of the airmen deployed, these tasks are not the primary combat mission of the Air Force created in 1947.

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has made the decision to focus on today's efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, rather than to remain clearly in front of peer nations with conventional combat capability. In the Air Force this is evident by the decision to stop production of F-22s. The initial estimate that it would require over 300 F-22s to retain a clear air superiority advantage has been whittled down to less than 200 in order to make room for assets needed in the current conflicts. Tactical ISR assets have moved up the acquisition priority ladder over the latest generation fighters, bombers, and even air refueling assets. Meanwhile, the life expectancy for fighters, bombers and tankers keeps getting pushed further east on the time scale. This shift in strategic guidance by the SecDef is an example of the resource strain that current operations in Afghanistan and Iraq are having on the DoD budget. The Air Force, along with the Army, is absorbing all of the costs associated with being tasked to accomplish the SSTR mission in these two countries. A finite defense budget means something has to give, and for the Air Force, it appears that future capability in the form of next generation fighters, bombers, and tankers has lost out. Of the Secretary of the Air Force and Air Force Chief of Staff's top five priorities, modernization of inventories and recapturing acquisition excellence are priorities four and five, respectively.[21]

Future capability is not all that is being affected by a growing SSTR mission. Legacy airframes either need to be replaced or refurbished. Neither is a high priority. Furthermore, it is impossible for military personnel to maintain advanced war-fighting skills while focusing on protracted COIN and SSTR operations. Aircrew who fly advanced strike aircraft need to train to a high level of proficiency in order to be prepared to meet a peer foe in a conventional conflict.

Interdiction and air to air engagement talent is being eroded every year that goes by because the focus has shifted to major COIN and SSTR efforts, which do not emphasize air to air and interdiction tactics, techniques, and procedures against a conventional threat. Major training exercises, such as Red Flag, are placing less and less emphasis on air to air and conventional interdiction training. In contrast, China, who is probably our closest peer competitor in terms of military capability, is currently centered on "selective transformation."[22] For the Chinese Air Force, this equates to focusing their training efforts to gaining and maintaining air superiority over the Taiwan Straits, while avoiding global power projection expectations, and more importantly, remaining disengaged from costly COIN and SSTR operations.[23] It should concern the U.S. that a possible talent gap is forming in critical air superiority skills between the Chinese Air Force and the USAF. Chinese advances in aerospace and other military technologies further exacerbate this problem.

It has been recommended that joint doctrine needs to be changed to address the Air Force transitioning from combat to stability operations, and to define the Joint Force Component Commander's (JFACC) role in the stability operations mission. Examples of suggested key Air Force contributions include integrating a military air control system into the host nation's air traffic control system, taking over the tactical air control mission, and employment of airborne information management assets such as AWACS, in order to assist in the recovery of host nation capabilities.[24] Using air traffic controllers and limited strategic airborne assets in this manner places additional strain on resources that are low density/high demand and should be reserved for combat. This is yet another example of a suggested doctrine that tasks the military to use existing resources for more missions, yet provides little account for the increase in forces requirement.

RECOMMENDATION

So how does the U.S. military, particularly the Army and Air Force, who are committing the majority of military forces to Iraq and Afghanistan, return their focus to combat capability? I assert that the answer lies in Condoleezza Rice's previously mentioned quote. The conventional military should be used to wage conventional or *traditional* warfare. JP 3-24, the Joint Publication for Counterinsurgency Operations, states that traditional warfare focuses on defeating the opposing military through force-on-force engagements.[25] It is imprudent to commit conventional forces to an environment that will be swarming with insurgents for years after the conventional warfare has reached termination. JP-1, the Joint Publication for Joint Warfare, states that military plans must include conditions under which termination of military involvement can be executed.[26] Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrate how failure to include a plan for termination of combat operations and a transition to SSTR can lead to the military finding itself enveloped in Krulak's Three Block War, involving two entire nations. If the U.S. stated in 2001 and again in 2003 that a timeline for termination of military involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq was indeterminate, there would most likely have been more objection by Congress, military leaders, and the public to committing conventional forces to either conflict.

The critical question that has not seemed to be answered in Iraq and Afghanistan is when does the conventional war end and irregular warfare against insurgents and SSTR operations begin? If this question has not been reasonably answered prior to hostilities occurring, it can take years or even be impossible to determine when the line from conventional to irregular warfare or SSTR operations has been crossed. Even worse, if it cannot be determined when the line has been crossed, there is no longer a clear objective. The objective to defeat the enemy forces is blurred and becomes a subset of the objective to provide security, so that the objectives

of providing and maintaining stability and engaging in nation building can be achieved. The consequences of trying to achieve numerous and often conflicting objectives simultaneously can be best illustrated by observing the current conditions in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan SOF forces and other agencies were used for years prior to 2001 and even after 2001 to affect political changes in that country that were more favorable to the U.S.[27] Had these operations been allowed to continue, unfettered by an invasion of conventional forces on a massive scale, many claim that Afghanistan would be safer, more stable, and even more favorable to U.S. interests today, much like special operations forces, in particular, General Aderholt claimed about Vietnam.[28] The current administration is even entertaining the idea that selected members of the Taliban might serve our interest more if allowed to have a seat in the Afghani government. This is remarkably reminiscent of the efforts taking place in Afghanistan prior to 2001. Currently, however, instead of an environment of small forces working with locals to affect conditions more favorable to U.S. interests, there now exists a large number of troops who are viewed by much of the indigenous population as an occupational force with unknown motives. These are favorable conditions for an insurgency to continue to develop and gain momentum.

Instead of small scale SOF operations being the only show in town in Afghanistan and Iraq, thousands of conventional forces conducting numerous missions are occupying the country. In an attempt to better affect COIN, SSTR, and nation building efforts, the military is changing doctrine to read more like the Forces, Missions, and Capabilities of the U.S. Special Forces, as defined in the 1980s.[29] The SOF mission in the 1980s reads almost exactly as it does today, while the conventional forces' doctrine, both at the service and joint level, is significantly modified almost every year. Understanding SOF capability and its historical successful application in irregular warfare is important because this can serve as an indicator of when the

application of conventional forces has gone off track. Some SOF units, such as the Special Forces, have an embedded SSTR capability. This capability does not come cheap, and requires a scale of investment in terms of money and training time that is not feasible to dedicate to conventional forces. An additional SOF concept worth noting, as related to SSTR, is that SSTR operations are applied by a small external force, working closely with indigenous populations, usually to create conditions to preclude conventional combat operations, and most certainly not in the aftermath of a conventional war. The Air Force and Army are attempting to apply SOF SSTR capability at the end of major conventional conflicts, using untrained conventional forces. As a result, the mission and application of capability are often in conflict.

There is not an easy answer for how to deal with the current situation in Afghanistan and Iraq. Although not the focus of this paper, up to now it has alluded to the concept that before committing conventional forces to a military operation, planning and thought must give consideration to the possibility of the requirement of major SSTR operations at the conclusion of combat operations. One could easily argue that inadequate prior planning failed to address the SSTR concerns. However, since it is too late to go back and re-plan the operations, and the problems created in Afghanistan and Iraq are not likely to solve themselves, a recommendation is appropriate. The following recommendation starts with the premise that the current state of unreadiness of our conventional forces suggests that relying on them to handle the SSTR mission is an incorrect utilization of our military.

The task of leading SSTR operations needs to be handed to the host nation, international institutions, and civilian contractors. The situation in Iraq is currently more palatable to this transition than in Afghanistan, however, there is significant risk in both countries. In order to understand the possible consequences of disengaging occupying forces from the SSTR mission,

this risk needs to be briefly discussed. If the governments of Afghanistan and Iraq cannot provide their own security, SSTR efforts will likely evolve into a protracted operation, and worse case, will fail. Competition for control of the government among ethnically diverse populations is a major risk in both countries, and could result in civil war. Additionally, an external interest could attempt to fill the power vacuum that exists in a vulnerable nation that is recently bereft of defensive capability. These issues are of even greater concern if the nation possesses critical resources for which there is global demand. The ensuing aftermath of any of these failures is undoubtedly one of the major reasons that the U.S. is hesitant to disengage conventional forces from the SSTR effort. However, the risk of these possible failures must be measured against the risk of maintaining a conventional force to conduct SSTR operations at the cost of an increasing loss of conventional combat capability.

In both Afghanistan and Iraq, however, there are measures that can be taken to mitigate the risk of failure if the host nation takes ownership of SSTR operations. The DoS should continue to assist the host nations in both advisory roles and facilitation of involvement by international institutions. International institutions and private contractor capability have oddly enough been severely underutilized in both countries. This could be due to political considerations or security concerns. Security concerns should be addressed prior to SSTR operations commencing, instead of simultaneously by the same forces. The reality in Afghanistan and Iraq is that eventually, the host nations will either have to take control of SSTR operations themselves, remain occupied by an external force, dissolve into a civil war, or be taken over by another outside player. There is precedence for a host government working with the DoS, international institutions, and civilian contractors to increase internal security and build modern infrastructure.

Saudi Arabia, while admittedly presenting a more permissive environment (in most cases) than Afghanistan and Iraq, provides an example of how external agents can shape and build a nation without an overbearing military presence. From the 1970s through the 1990s, Western contractors built up Saudi infrastructure and military capability, and, working with the host nation, provided the preponderance of their own security. The situation in Saudi Arabia during those decades was not as far removed from Iraq as many might think. The DoS and international institutions coordinated with Saudi leadership to determine a desired endstate that could be endorsed by the host nation. Saudi Arabia then took ownership of the "nation building" that subsequently occurred over the next three decades. There is no guarantee that Iraq is in a position to provide security to non-military external agents who could rebuild that nation. However, without the aggressive involvement of the DoS and international institutions, it will remain impossible to determine when Iraq has reached that milestone. A conventional occupying force that remains engaged in combat operations cannot and should not be relied upon to objectively determine Iraq's capability to take ownership of SSTR operations.

The situation in Afghanistan does not reflect the same level of infrastructure, security, or government competency as in Iraq. If U.S. policy determines that Afghanistan merits rebuilding efforts, two elements need to be addressed. First, Coalition forces must establish a secure environment in order for non-military SSTR contributors to be successful. Second, large scale international assistance is needed to augment U.S. efforts once the first condition has been met. It is clear, after over eight years of protracted irregular warfare operations, that Afghanistan requires significant attention in order for effective and lasting security to take root in that country. The Coalition has not dedicated adequate combat forces to affect this mission. The result is piecemeal security operations, combined with COIN and piecemeal SSTR. Inadequate

security continues to thwart NGOs and contractors from effectively conducting SSTR within the borders. The scale of effort required to provide Afghanistan with a mere basic level of infrastructure is staggering, and would be an enormous challenge even in a totally permissive environment. Under the best of circumstances, nation building in Afghanistan exceeds the capability of the U.S. military. Add COIN and other combat operations to this enormous effort and it becomes clear why the situation in Afghanistan has not markedly improved over the past eight years. The U.S. military does not have the capability to conduct SSTR in the entire country while combat operations are still taking place.

COUNTER-ARGUMENTS

It is irrelevant to attempt to associate opposing viewpoints with individuals or groups, because at current, the majority of the national and military leadership represent the opposing view. This is evident in the change in doctrine and priorities that reflect the will to allow the military to continue to assume the lead in SSTR operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Admittedly, the Army and Air Force have taken on this additional mission set in stride, and have made gallant attempts to "do everything with less." The adverse effects that these policies are having on conventional capability are often acknowledged, but mitigated by assuming that a conflict with a near peer opponent is unlikely. This is an aggressive assumption to make in a global environment where demand for resources, shifting demographics, and interwoven national economies are more prevalent than ever before. Those who support transitioning the entire military in order to give it the capability to conduct massive SSTR and nation-building operations seem to outnumber those who express serious concern over the state of the conventional force. Mild pushback does occasionally occur, and there are some cases where this pushback has had terminal results, as can be appreciated by the former Secretary of the Air Force

and Air Force Chief of Staff. For the most part, however, the Army and Air Force have saluted smartly and have adjusted priorities and requirements in an attempt to facilitate the SSTR mission.

One of the most popular arguments in support of the military carrying the SSTR mission is difficult to counter. This argument presents that the current situation in Iraq and especially in Afghanistan, requires a military presence in order for SSTR operations to be at all effective. This argument assumes that the host nations are incapable of either providing security or lack SSTR capability, or both. While this is most likely true in Afghanistan, the default answer is not necessarily that conventional forces should be tasked with this mission while simultaneously conducting combat operations. Using the previously mentioned SOF SSTR example, one might look at this as a problem that should be solved incrementally, instead of attempting to fix an entire nation all at once. Establish security in a sector that is manageable, and then introduce civilian and host nation SSTR contributors. Meanwhile, conventional forces are free to conduct military operations necessary to secure the next sector. Admittedly, attempting to accomplish this in two nations simultaneously, while suffering from short-handed DoS and international support, is problematic, hence the appeal of the military rolling SSTR into ongoing combat operations.

CONCLUSION

An effective reversal of the trend of the military changing roles and accepting non-combat missions must begin at the top. Prior to committing forces to combat, consideration must be given to the state that the host nation will find itself in once the enemy forces have been defeated. This requires planning for a SSTR and nation-building capability before the first enemy target is attacked. Political leaders must be extremely selective in their use of the

conventional military, never forgetting Clausewitz's assertion that war is a violent contest of wills. Prudent use of conventional forces will re-instill the "shock and awe," and "fly, fight and win" mindset back into the Army and Air Force. Clarity of mission for the U.S. military cannot be allowed to be degraded due to non-combat mission creep. The Army and Air Force must re-center their vision of maintaining an unmatched conventional combat capability in order to deter, and if necessary, defeat a near peer enemy. Reflecting back to at least the Civil War, the U.S. has known that there is a need for a stability and nation-building force to become increasingly involved in a defeated nation when hostilities begin to subside. A large scale insurgency prohibits effective stability and nation-building operations, even when conducted by military forces. The military should not be appointed to take on this mission, but rather augment forces assigned to the Department of State, international institutions, and private enterprises who can work in concert with host nations to affect a desired endstate.

Unfortunately, the DoS has not received the funding or increase in personnel required to develop the SSTR and nation-building capability that is required in Afghanistan and Iraq. The DoS did in fact propose running the "Future of Iraq Project" prior to hostilities beginning in 2003, but the DoD was skeptical of their capabilities and decided to take over the effort.[30] If the military SSTR capabilities were to be captured and defined in terms of equipment, dollars, and personnel, this would indicate just how much growth is required in the DoS. The Bush Administration requested $24.1 million in 2006 to fund the DoS Office for Reconstruction and Stabilization, with an additional $100 million for contingency conflict response funds.[31] A Congressional Research Report states that FY 2009 appropriations for military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq were approximately $227 billion and $683 billion, respectively.[32] This unbalanced ratio illustrates that meeting the growth requirement for the DoS to affect operations

in Iraq and Afghanistan is most likely unrealistic in the foreseeable future. However, international institutions and civilian contractors could offset this requirement, if security conditions in the host nations and international political attitudes permit. In best case conditions, the host nation itself, who has the best understanding of cultural considerations, would provide the main effort of SSTR capability. Establishing host nation security should be the external forces and host nation's objective immediately following combat operations. Once a permissive environment is established, free of large scale insurgent activity, then a reasonably sized DoS force, with international assistance, can be expected to affect successful SSTR operations. The more conventional and irregular wars that the U.S. wages, the larger this stability and nation-building force will have to be, but that is one of the costs of going to war.

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[1] Quoted in Steven Metz. *Learning From Iraq: Counterinsurgency in American Strategy*, Leavenworth, KS: Strategic Studies Institute, January 2007, 15.

[2] Burdett K. Thompson "Nation Building: A Bad Idea Who's Time Has Come?" Master's thesis, Army War College. 2004, 1.

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